



Australian Bureau of Statistics

Education Services

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Resources



GeoQ 08 – What is the distribution of population in Australia?



Please note: This task can be completed by hand using coloured pencils and an atlas or by accessing Google Maps. You can download this activity as a Word (.doc) file using the links at the bottom of the page.

Data:

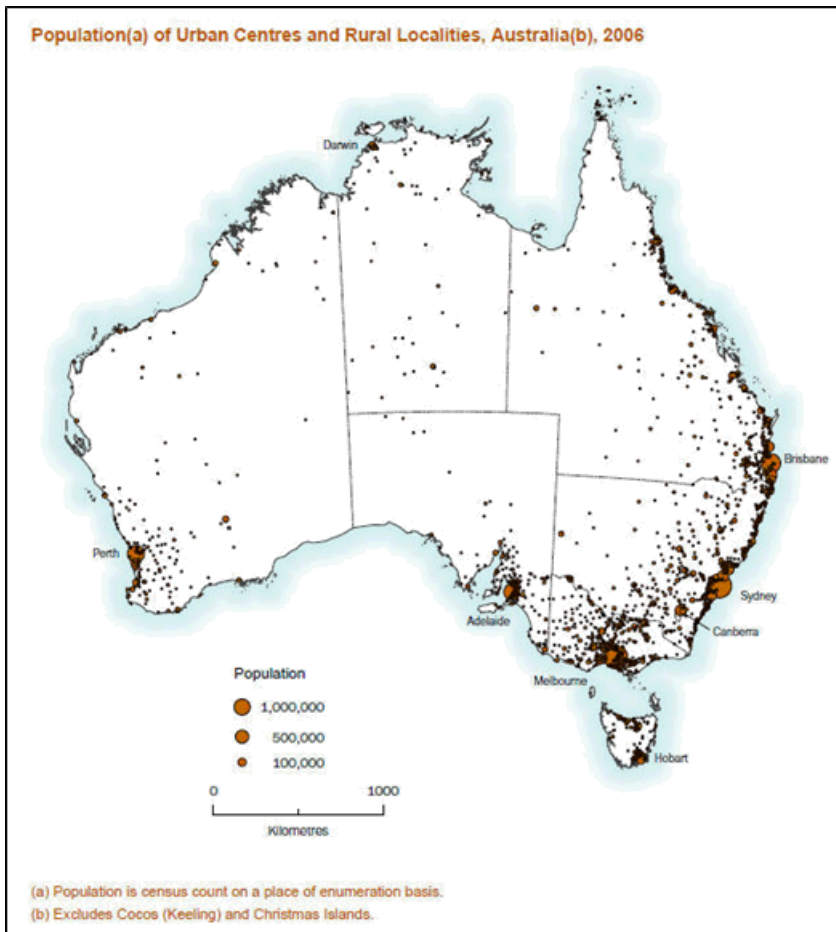


Figure 1 Population of Urban Centres and Rural Localities, 2006

Source: A Picture of a Nation, the Statisticians Report on the 2006 Census, 2006. (ABS cat. no. 2070.0)

Task:

1. In your own words explain the meaning of the words urban and rural.
2. Use the following information to summarise at least two changes to Australia's population distribution between 1901 and 2006.

Australia's Changing Settlement Pattern 1901 – 2006

- In 1901, 37% of Australians were in Metropolitan urban areas (includes capital cities and surrounding suburbs).
- At the 1911 Census, 42% of the population was living in rural areas.
- By 2006, only 12% of Australians were located in rural areas.
- In 2006, 57% of Australians were in Metropolitan urban areas.

- In 2006, 77% of the population was in towns and cities of over 1000 people within 50km of the coast.

Source: A Picture of a Nation, the Statisticians Report on the 2006 Census, 2006. (ABS cat. no. 2070.0)

3. Imagine you are travelling between the places identified below. On the map provided, show the location of the main roads linking these places and label the towns.

- Adelaide to Darwin via Alice Springs
- Adelaide to Dubbo via Broken Hill
- Adelaide to Perth via Kalgoorlie
- Perth to Port Hedland via Carnarvon
- Perth to Port Hedland via Newman (inland route)
- Port Hedland to Darwin via Broome and Katherine
- Darwin to Townsville via Mt Isa
- Sydney to Darwin via Dubbo and Mt Isa
- Sydney to Adelaide via Broken Hill
- Melbourne to Broken Hill via Mildura
- Hobart to Devonport (2 routes)
- Adelaide to Melbourne, to Sydney to Brisbane to Cairns (via coastal route)

4. Draw rings around 3 areas which have no population centres shown. Shade the largest of these areas yellow.

- Use the scale on the map to calculate approximately how large this area is. Show your working.
- Approximately how many times would Tasmania fit into the area you have shaded?

5. For your state or territory describe the distribution of population as shown on the map above. Include the following in your description; most people, least people, provide at least 3 place names and use the key provided to give an approximate population of at least one urban centre.

Extension:

Population density is the number of people per square kilometre. Population density is a measure of how people are spread across the land.

6. What two pieces of information are required to calculate the population density of a given state?

7. From your study of the map identify the state or states where:

- Population density decreases from east to west
- Population density decreases from west to east
- Population is concentrated in the SE corner of the state
- Population is concentrated in the SW corner of the state
- Population density is very low
- The population of the state is concentrated around its capital city
- The coast is lightly populated
- The population is concentrated along the coastline

8. From your study of the map identify the capital city with the smallest population.

9. Does this city have a population closer to 100,000, 500,000 or 1,000,000?

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GeoQ_08.doc
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